

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 240953Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8659
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PDIP PBOR CB TH
SUBJECT: CONSENSUS APPLAUDS FONMIN UPPADIT VISIT TO PHNOM PENH

REF: BANGKOK 2308

1. UNANIMOUS PRAISE FOLLOWED THE ANNOUNCEMENT JAN 23 THAT FONMIN UPPADIT WOULD VISIT PHNOM PENH SOON TO "PROMOTE FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA. PRESS HAS REPORTED THAT THE VISIT WOULD OCCUR JAN 30 - FEB 2. SOME CAUTIONARY NOTES WERE SOUNDED, BUT FOCUS WAS ON HOPE THAT THE VISIT WOULD SOMEHOW ELIMINATE THE BORDER ATTACKS FROM CAMBODIA, THE LATEST BEING A PURPORTEDLY JOINT KHMER ROUGE-THAI INSURGENT ATTACK ON A THAI BUS JAN 22 IN CHANTHABURI PROVINCE NEAR THE COMMON BORDER, IN WHICH SEVEN THAIS WERE KILLED AND 23 OTHERS WOUNDED.

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2. PM KRIANGSAK TOLD THE PRESS JAN 23 THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE NEWS OF THE VISIT AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, HE INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT ANTICIPATE ANY SPECIAL AGREEMENTS WOULD BE CONCLUDED DURING THE VISIT "BECAUSE WE HAVE TO SEE THEIR ATTITUDE FIRST." SEPARATELY, FONMIN UPPADIT TOLD THE PRESS THAT

THE VISIT STEMMED FROM AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN PM
KRIANGSAK AND CAMBODIAN PREMIER POL POT.

3. FORMER FONMIN PHICHAIRATTAKUN JAN 23 ALSO WELCOMED THE VISIT
AND OUTLINED THE PROBLEM AREAS HIGH BANGKOK AND PHNOM PENH
SHOULD ADDRESS, ALL OF WHICH ECHO THE COMMUNIQUE PHICHAIR AND
CAMBODIA'S IENG SARY SIGNED IN JULY, 1976 POINTS RAISED BY
PHICHAIR, WHICH SOUND LIKE A SENSIBLE AGENDA FOR THE RTG,
ARE: (A) OPENING OF EMBASSIES AND EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS;
(B) FORMING A JOINT COMMISSION TO SETTLE THE BORDER DEMARCATION
PROBLEM; (C) JOINT FISHING VENTURES; (D) RELEASE OF THAI FISHERMEN
HELD FOR ALLEGEDLY TRESPASSING IN CAMBODIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS;
(E) RE-ESTABLISHING TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION; AND (F)
PERSUADING CAMBODIA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEKONG COMMITTEE.

4. MEDIA AND PUBLIC REACTION HAS ALSO BEEN FAVORABLE.
NATION REVIEW, JAN 24, HOWEVER, RECOMMENDED THAT THE FONMIN
BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE USED BY PHNOM PENH IN ANTI-VIET-NAM
PROPAGANDA. NATION ALSO NOTED THE SUCCESS HANOI HAS ENJOYED
IN GARNERING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS CALL FOR NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT AND URGED THE FONMIN TO MAKE A CLEAR
STATEMENT OF THAI NEUTRALITY REGARDING THE CONFLICT BEFORE
HE DEPARTS FOR PHNOM PENH.

5. COMMENT: IN THIS MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY BREAKTHROUGH,
THAIS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT HOPE FOR RE-ENDORSEMENT OF THE
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1976 PHICHAIR-IENG SARY AGREEMENT. MOST PRESSING ISSUE IS, OF
COURSE, BORDER FIGHTING. THAIS, HOWEVER, WISELY ARE MAKING NO
MAJOR PREDICTIONS ON THIS OR ANY OTHER SCORE SINCE THEY REMAIN
WARY OF CAMBODIAN INTENTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, BANGKOK CLEARLY
HOPES THAT CAMBODIA'S BORDER WAR ON THE EAST WILL LEAD PHNOM
PENH TO AGREE TO REDUCE TENSION ON ITS WESTERN AND NORTHERN
BORDERS WITH THAILAND.
WHITEHOUSE

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